

## **"The Kind-Eyed Chief": Forgotten Champion of Hawai'i's Freedom**

Frank W. Gapp

His name was Thomas ap Catesby Jones, or, translated from the Welsh, "Thomas, the son of Catesby Jones." He was a Virginian, a U.S. naval officer who twice sailed into Hawaiian waters to oppose British domination of the Islands and who achieved some success both times and was rewarded both times by praise from his government and abuse from his countrymen. Historians, generally, have picked up the abuse, not the praise.

Few writers have understood the life and times of Lieutenant Jones, later Commodore Jones. It is the purpose of the present writer, who, if he had lived in Virginia early in the 19th Century would have been a neighbor of the gallant old sea dog, to recall events that have been overlooked by others.

In 1841, the Commonwealth of Virginia presented a sword to Commodore Jones in recognition of "his patriotic services during the late war with Great Britain, and more particularly for the gallantry and good conduct he displayed in the capture of the pirates of Barataria, on the 16th of September, 1814. . . ."<sup>1</sup> Although Jones didn't capture Jean Lafitte, he did seize one of his vessels and put the pirates to flight in a raid on their headquarters. His action against the British consisted of a desperate stand in the defense of New Orleans, with five small gunboats against a British armada of some 80 vessels of all sizes. Jones was wounded and captured in December of 1814, but his daring fight against overwhelming odds gave Andrew Jackson time to shift his troops from Mobile to New Orleans and win a notable victory on December 8, 1815.

Later in his career, however, Jones was court-martialed for oppression of seamen and mishandling of Navy funds on the coast

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of California in the wild days of the Gold Rush. Jones denied all charges. He thought the trial unfair and complained that the Secretary of the Navy approved a guilty verdict on several counts before Jones had been able to appeal to the President.

Certainly, Thomas ap Catesby Jones was controversial, sometimes cantankerous, a martinet, quick to have a sailor lashed for drunkenness or desertion—a Calvinist at sea. But he deserves more recognition than has been given him by later historians. Between the heroism of his early years and the bitterness of his last cruise as commander of the U.S. Pacific Squadron (1848–50), Jones played an important role in the expansion of the U.S. across the continent to the Pacific Ocean. And he was particularly effective in the relations of the U.S. with the island kingdom called the Sandwich Islands in his day and now the State of Hawai'i.<sup>2</sup>

#### WHALES, MISSIONARIES, AND MUTINY

When the whaling ships began to use Hawai'i for the rest and recreation of crews returning from the high seas off Japan, foreign commercial interests in Honolulu expanded. About the same time, missionaries from New England came to the Islands to preach and teach. While the Islanders welcomed the teaching, the whalers objected to the strict morals introduced into a hitherto free-and-easy tropical society.

Trouble in paradise became obvious to the world after a macabre mutiny aboard the whaling ship *Globe* in January of 1824. Several desperadoes, some of them recruited from deserters in the Hawaiian Islands, seized the ship, butchered the captain and officers, threw them overboard, and sailed to the Mulgrave Islands (now called the Marshalls), where they tried to set up their own kingdom and browbeat the natives. However, six crewmen rebelled against the mutineers, got back aboard the *Globe*, and sailed her to Valparaiso by dead reckoning.<sup>3</sup>

Within a year, New England whaling interests complained about the Hawaiian Islands. They petitioned President James Monroe, citing the mutiny on the *Globe* and asking that "a vessel may immediately proceed to Mulgrave's island in search of these men."<sup>4</sup>

The Nantucket whalers followed this petition with another, five months later, addressed to John Quincy Adams, who had succeeded Monroe. In this petition the shipowners quoted an American recently returned from Hawai'i, who reported:

When I left the Sandwich Islands, there were over one hundred and fifty seamen (principally deserters from the whale ships) prowling about the country, naked and destitute, associating themselves with the natives, assuming their habits and acquiring their vices. . . .

And the petitioners added their own fears:

Is there not reason to believe that the Sandwich Islands, if government does not interfere, will soon become a nest of pirates and murderers?<sup>6</sup>

A third petition, sent by shipowners of New Bedford, Mass., complained about the British influence in Hawai'i, declaring that they spread the rumor: "The English have men-of-war, but the Americans have only whalers and trading vessels."<sup>6</sup> Although not named in the petition, Richard Charlton, the British consul, was probably the target of their complaint. Charlton never missed an opportunity to tell the Hawaiians that the Americans were a colony of Great Britain and had no navy, and he spread wild tales about the secret political purposes of the American missionaries.<sup>7</sup>

#### THE CRUISE OF THE *DOLPHIN*

Two months after the *Globe* survivors arrived in Valparaiso, Commodore Isaac Hull, aboard the frigate *United States*, flagship of the U.S. Pacific Squadron, sent Lieut. John "Mad Jack" Percival in the schooner *Dolphin* to search for the *Globe* mutineers in the Mulgraves and to return by way of Hawai'i.<sup>8</sup> Percival sailed to the Mulgraves, found only two of the mutineers, probably the least guilty of the lot, and returned to Hawai'i, where he proceeded to cause turmoil in the Islands.

Percival antagonized the chiefs, quarreled with the missionaries (he called them "a bunch of damned schoolmasters"), and spent much time trying to get salvage rights to a ship that had foundered on the coast of Lāna'i. Furthermore, his men rioted, attacked a missionary house, and bashed Hiram Bingham in an attempt to force the missionaries to rescind their order forbidding visits of young Hawaiian women to the ships in Honolulu harbor. Although Percival denied having directed his men to the house of the leader of the missionaries, later testimony quoted him as saying, "I wish to Christ that they had murdered the damned rascal and torn his house down."<sup>9</sup> The Hawaiians called the *Dolphin* "the mischief-making man-of-war."<sup>10</sup>

Before the *Dolphin* could return to the Pacific Squadron from its

11-month cruise, Commodore Hull, on his flagship *United States*, received instructions to go to the Sandwich Islands. Secretary of the Navy Samuel Southard enclosed a copy of the petition of the New Bedford citizens and told the Commodore to "make a proper disposition of the seamen of the Sandwich Islands," and also to "communicate to the government of the islands the intention of sending occasionally one of our public ships there, with a view to the protection of our interests, and the cultivation of friendly relations with the government and inhabitants of the islands."<sup>11</sup>

Unwilling to leave the South American coast, where Chile and Peru were in the midst of throwing off the domination of Spain, Hull sent Lieut. Commandant Thomas ap Catesby Jones, newly arrived from the States, to take command of the sloop-of-war *Peacock*.

#### THE CRUISE OF THE *PEACOCK*

Captain Jones, impressed by the fact that he was carrying out a duty that should have been the obligation of the senior officer of the Squadron, set out from Valparaiso for the long haul across the Pacific. At Payta, on the coast of Peru, he picked up three Hawaiians who wanted to return to their native country and took them with him on the *Peacock*.<sup>12</sup> Information from these natives may have been the best introduction he was to get to the mid-Pacific islands.

When the *Peacock* crossed the bar and anchored in the inner harbor of Honolulu on October 11, 1826, the ship exchanged salutes with the fort, and Jones was rowed ashore to exchange greetings with officials. He saw a city of "7 to 9,000 inhabitants and about 200 foreigners . . . with two very respectable, well-kept hotels, several billiard tables, ball alleys and tippling or dram shops, that never-failing bane to good order and industry."<sup>13</sup> The town itself looked to Captain Jones like a collection of 2,000 hayricks, with narrow, dusty passageways between, clustered at the foot of the break in the mountains.

His first efforts in this strange land were to get acquainted. Boki, the Governor of O'ahu, greeted Jones with fine hospitality, and made available a two-story frame house on the wharf, near where the *Peacock* was anchored, for Jones to use during his stay in Honolulu. And he met Kalanimoku, the Prime Minister, who was helpful later in reaching agreement on debts which the Hawaiian chiefs were presumed to owe to the foreigners. Ka'ahumanu, the Queen Regent, without whom nothing could be done, was on the island of Maui,

and might not return to talk with another American Navy captain ("Mad Jack" Percival had left the Islands only six months earlier, and the memory of his visit was still fresh).

Jones talked with Hiram Bingham and other missionaries in Honolulu, particularly with Elisha Loomis, the printer. It was Loomis who translated Jones's letters, delivered to Hawaiian officials over the next few months as Jones tried to explain his mission to the Islands.<sup>14</sup>

As a result of Jones's letters, Ka'ahumanu returned to Honolulu, making it possible for negotiations with King Kamehameha III to begin. Only 11 years old at the time, the King nevertheless was included in all conferences.

In the various negotiations that followed, Jones found that his principal opponent was Charlton, the British Consul. But he also got very little help from John Coffin Jones (no relation), who was U.S. Commercial Agent and representative of the Boston firm of Marshall and Wildes, and thus one of the principal claimants to the debts that the Hawaiian chiefs were thought to have owed foreigners.

Very quickly Jones became an arbitrator for the disputes that plagued the Islands. He presided at a meeting of missionaries and merchants in which Consul Charlton was the principal accuser, representing merchants who wanted to expel the missionaries. The missionaries agreed to answer any accusations put in writing, but the merchants refused to be that specific. With Jones as moderator, the meeting eventually reached a stalemate, and Jones suggested that, since the mission was not condemned, it must be considered as being vindicated. He adjourned the meeting.<sup>15</sup> With this meeting, the position of the American missionaries became secure in the Islands.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile, Jones made progress in picking up deserters who roamed the Islands. More than 30 were rounded up. Some were signed on the *Peacock's* crew, and others went to American whaling ships in the harbor. Many others remained, for Charlton showed no interest in rounding up British subjects, some of them convicts who had escaped from New Zealand and Australia. As head of a mission that was, in his eyes, far more diplomatic than military, Jones constantly entertained Hawaiian chiefs and foreign consular officials and others as he sought to establish a good working relationship with the people of the Islands. He spent much more than his Navy pay and allowance on good will.

His efforts paid off at a meeting of the grand council on December

22, 1826, a meeting called by Ka'ahumanu and attended by all the officers of state—the governors of the islands, the chiefs, and high-ranking nobles—to consider “Articles of Arrangement” that Jones had worked out, a treaty in everything but name.

It was at this meeting that Jones and Charlton clashed decisively. Opening prayers by the missionaries had barely concluded when Charlton rose and declared that the meeting had no authority to deal with any foreign government whatever:

... the islanders were mere tenants at will, subjects of Great Britain, without power to treat with any other state or Prince, and that if they [the Hawaiian chiefs] enter into treaty stipulations with the United States, Great Britain would soon assert her right by taking possession of the Islands, a right which his King [George IV] and country had never relinquished.<sup>17</sup>

This view of Britain's control of the Hawaiian Islands was one that Charlton never gave up in the years he served as British Consul, but at this meeting in 1826 Jones had a ready answer. Jones asked Charlton, What was the character of his commission to the Islands?

Charlton replied that he was Consul General to the Sandwich Islands, with full power to appoint vice consuls for the Society and other groups of islands.

Jones then asked, “What are the duties and functions of the Consul General?”

Charlton's answer was in accordance with international understanding of the office of consul.

Then Jones lowered the boom. Was it customary, he asked, for a prince or potentate to send consuls, consuls general, or commercial agents to any port or place within their own territory?

Charlton had no answer. According to Jones, Charlton “was dum-founded.”<sup>18</sup> And when the chiefs and nobles heard the translation of this byplay, they were surprised, and their understanding of their power to run their own country without instructions from Great Britain was increased at this moment.

Kalanimoku, in particular, rose a bit on his couch (he was quite ill at this time, and was to die a few days later) and said:

It is so. . . . Is America and England equal? We never understood so before. We knew that England was our friend and that Capt. Charlton was here to protect us, but we did not know that Mr. Jones, the Commercial Agent, was the representative of America—we thought he was for trade only.<sup>19</sup>

With Charlton's objections beaten down, the meeting considered the “Articles of Arrangement,” a trade agreement between the U.S.

and the Hawaiian Kingdom, which was accepted and signed by Thomas ap Catesby Jones, and Elisabeta Ka'ahumanu as Queen Regent, Kalanimoku as Prime Minister, and the principal chiefs Boki, Hoapili, and Lidia Nāmāhana.<sup>20</sup>

A few days later the matter of debts was settled, after being scaled down by Captain Jones. Some thought the debts were not scaled down enough, for the merchants wanted to keep them as high as possible. Very little was in writing, however, and the chiefs thought they were paying exorbitant prices. A compromise had to be reached, and Jones finally came up with a price the chiefs would agree to pay and which the merchants would accept.

The agreement, probably suggested by Kalanimoku, resulted in selling off the last of the sandalwood over later years, but the Hawaiians preferred this settlement to one suggested by Charlton that would have transferred up to one fourth of the land of the Hawaiian Kingdom to British ownership.<sup>21</sup> This in itself would have been a long step toward colonialization and British control of the Islands.

Although there are some who blame T. ap C. Jones for the stripping of the sandalwood forests, it seems more likely that sandalwood intended to pay off the government debt was sold surreptitiously, leaving the debt payments unsatisfied.<sup>22</sup> This happened in years after the *Peacock* had left the Islands, when the Commercial Agent John Coffin Jones was overseer for the repayment of the "sandalwood debts."

In the course of a few months, Thomas ap Catesby Jones had wiped out the ruthlessness of "Mad Jack" Percival. The Hawaiians now called him "the kind-eyed chief,"<sup>23</sup> for they appreciated Jones's conferring with them instead of dictating terms, as previous sea captains had done.

As the *Peacock* prepared to sail, Hawaiian royalty, including Ka'ahumanu and Kamehameha III, accompanied the officers to the ship. Jones wrote:

The royal guests, with the English and American Consuls, dined on board, and between four and five o'clock, after passing a very pleasant day, took their final leave under a salute of 21 guns, when we made sail in further prosecution of our voyage.<sup>24</sup>

Jones returned to the United States that same year, served as Inspector of Ordinance for five years, during which time he was appointed captain, then the highest rank in the Navy. For almost two years he tried to organize the South Seas Exploring Expedition,



but he had to resign because of ill health and political maneuvering. In 1842, he became commander of the Pacific Squadron, with the frigate *United States* as his flagship. It was a position that was to take him back to the Hawaiian Islands, again in a time of turmoil.

#### THE CRUISE OF THE *UNITED STATES*

Commodore Jones had barely arrived in Callao, in May 1842 after a lengthy voyage around Cape Horn, when he reported the existence of a powerful French squadron, which he considered a threat to American interests in the Pacific and particularly to the Hawaiian Islands. He sent a letter to the Secretary of the Navy A.P. Upshur, suggesting that the previous commander of the U.S. forces in the Pacific had made no adequate answer to such a strong naval threat. He wrote:

Had I been on station at the time, I might have considered it my duty to have followed this expedition, should the course have been directed toward the Washington, or Sandwich Islands, or any point on the coast of our own continent washed by the Pacific Ocean, and to have propounded certain interrogations to the French commander. . . . From the civil appointments and equipage of this expedition, colonization is undoubtedly its object. . . . The occupation of the Sandwich Islands by any European Government would be most disastrous to our whale and commercial interests in these seas. . . .<sup>25</sup>

In this letter, Commodore Jones expressed his concern over the activities of the French in the Pacific, and he assumed that the Navy Department knew that he was also watching the British. The time for exploration had passed. Colonization and trade were now most important. The British seized Hong Kong in 1841 and took over title to it the next year. The French squadron that worried Jones colonized the Marquesas Islands. In Canada the British were pressing southward and laying claim to Oregon.

The British also expressed interest in Mexican-held California, a territory remote from Mexico City and already being infiltrated by Americans. In 1841, Richard Packenham, the British Minister to Mexico, contacted Lord Aberdeen, the Foreign Secretary, suggesting the formation of a group to colonize Upper California:

I believe there is no part of the World offering greater natural advantages for the establishment of an English colony than the Province of Upper California. . . . Its commanding position on the Pacific, its fine harbors, its forests of excellent timber . . . appear to me to render it by all means desirable, in a political point of view, that California should not fall into the hands of any Power but that of England; and the present debilitated condition of Mexico, and the gradual increase of the foreign population in California render it probable that its separation from Mexico will be effected at no distant period. . . .<sup>26</sup>



Packenham's suggestion went from Lord Aberdeen to Lord Stanley in the Colonial Office, who replied in the course of time that, although not in favor of sending a company of adventurers to the California coast, Her Majesty's Government would consider favorably a plan that would cede territory in California to England in exchange for the debts then owed to British holders of Mexican bonds.<sup>27</sup>

The major problem, however, was Texas, an independent republic with a poorly defined boundary with Mexico that invited incursions from one side against the other. This was the problem that most affected Commodore Jones as commander of the Pacific Squadron.

Early in September of 1842, Jones received a letter from John Parrott, U.S. Consul at Mazatlan, Mexico, informing him of "three highly belligerent declarations" by the Government of Mexico against the United States. In particular, an undiplomatic protest of J. M. de Bocanegra, the Mexican Secretary of Foreign Relations, to Daniel Webster, the U.S. Secretary of State, accused the United States of complicity in the revolution of Texas against the Mexicans and "protested solemnly against the aggressions which the citizens of those States are constantly repeating upon the Mexican territory." Bocanegra declared that Mexico could not tolerate "a course of conduct which produces an incomprehensible state of things—a state neither of peace nor of war, but inflicting upon the Mexican Republic the same injuries and inconveniences as if war had been declared. . . ."<sup>28</sup>

Jones interpreted this message as a "provisional declaration of war," which would have meant that Mexico could start hostilities at any time without further recourse to diplomacy.

At the same time, Jones received a copy of a Boston newspaper that repeated a rumor that the British were about to take over California in exchange for the bonded indebtedness of Mexico held by British subjects—a reflection of Lord Stanley's opinions. And, what seemed to be confirmation of these rumors, the flagship of the British Squadron, *Dublin*, under Rear-Admiral Richard Thomas, suddenly departed Callao under sealed orders.

Jones went to Lima, only a few miles from Callao, to confer with the U.S. Consul there. As a result of this conference, Consul J. C. Pickett wrote to Secretary of State Daniel Webster:

Here we think it not improbable that the United States and Mexico are now at war, believing the Circular of the Mexican Government and the Minister's letter to you of the 31st of May last calculated to produce that result.

We are rather of opinion, too, that Mexico has ceded California to Great Britain and

that the latter is about to take possession. Admiral Thomas sailed yesterday in the British frigate 'Dublin'—destination unknown, and a corvette left Callao a few days ago in the same manner. British vessels of war on this coast are never sent to sea so mysteriously on ordinary occasions.

Commodore Jones proceeds immediately to California in the 'United States,' accompanied by the 'Cyane' and 'Dale'.<sup>29</sup>

Jones returned to Callao, resupplied his ships, and put to sea on the first favorable tide. At sea, he conferred with the commanders of his ships,<sup>30</sup> showed them the letter from Consul Parrott in which he said, "it is highly probable that there will be war between the two countries," and solicited their advice on the course he should pursue. The captains agreed on proceeding to Monterey to confront Mexican authorities and, if necessary, Thomas and the *Dublin*. Then Jones sent the *Dale* to Panama with letters for the Secretary of the Navy explaining his actions, and took the *United States* and *Cyane* northward as the crews prepared for the possibility of a fight.

The two ships arrived off the port of Monterey on October 19, 1842, after 42 days at sea, and the *United States* anchored in 7 fathoms with the port-side battery bearing on the town. At 4 in the afternoon, Commodore Jones sent a landing party, headed by Captain Armstrong, to "The Governor and civil commander of the department of Monterey de California" and called for immediate surrender.<sup>31</sup>

Captain Armstrong soon returned to the *United States*, having delivered his message, and the Commodore waited. Messengers could be seen ashore, hurrying from the presidio to the fort and back. Don Juan Baptista Alvarado, acting Governor of Monterey, sent an urgent message to General Don Manuel Micheltorena (who was in Los Angeles) asking for instructions. But that was a useless move, for Micheltorena was 400 miles away. He asked the military commandant, Don Mariano Silva, what could be done, and Silva sent Alvarado a message that he had only 22 regular soldiers in the fort and 11 pieces of artillery and "the fortifications of the castle are of no consequence, as every one knows."<sup>32</sup>

At 11:30 that evening a boat put out from shore bearing Mexican officials and an American merchant, Thomas O. Larkin, resident of Monterey and in a few years to become the first U.S. Consul in California. Larkin translated for the Mexicans. After minimal negotiations, the town surrendered, and the next morning Jones sent a company of marines ashore to occupy the fort. The Mexican flag was hauled down, and the U.S. flag raised and saluted by guns from both ships. Those were the first shots fired.

A few hours later, Jones was rowed ashore and visited the presidio, where Larkin found newspapers with August dates (three months after Bocanegra's belligerent letter) that showed Mexico and the U.S. still at peace. The threatened war had not developed, nor did Rear-Admiral Thomas show up in the *Dublin* to contest the takeover. Jones was finally convinced. He immediately returned the town to Mexican authorities. The U.S. flag was lowered and the Mexican flag raised. Guns from the *United States* and *Cyane* saluted both flags, and Monterey returned to its former sleepy atmosphere.

Sailors aboard the two American ships were disappointed—they had expected a quick victory and much glory to pass around to individuals—and they blamed the Commodore. William Meyers, a gunner aboard the *Cyane*, wrote in his diary: "October 22, Saturday . . . Scrubbing paint work, washing sponges &c. At 12 dinner. The chieftain of Monterey is a humbugging old fudge. . . ." <sup>33</sup>

Jones, however, explained his actions in long letters to Secretary Upshur and to Waddy Thompson, the U.S. Minister in the Mexican capital. <sup>34</sup>

At this time, General Don Manuel Micheltorena, who had just been appointed Governor of the two Californias, was on his way to Monterey to take over his new position. He had landed at San Diego and had reached Los Angeles on his way northward when he heard from Alvarado that the two U.S. war vessels had arrived at the port and demanded its surrender. This was several days after Jones had already returned Monterey. Micheltorena described the action that he took in a letter to his Secretary of War:

I wished myself a thunderbolt, to fly and annihilate the invaders, but 110 leagues intervened between me and them. . . . On the following day, the 26th, I began my march. . . . We thus marched for two hours, during which my soul was rapt in ecstasies at the flattering prospect of a speedy and certain victory, in a war as just as national on our side, when another extraordinary courier brought me communications by which his excellency Senor Alvarado and the chief of the naval forces of the United States inform me of the evacuation of that place, . . . and the restoration and salute of the national Mexican tri-color flag. <sup>35</sup>

Micheltorena's letter is lengthy and flattering to himself and to the Mexican forces he commanded. It shows a provincial governor trying to take credit for beating off an attack that had, in actuality, been discontinued by Jones himself.

Meanwhile, Commodore Jones planned to spend the winter on the California coast. He transferred his broad pennant to the *Cyane* and sent the *United States* to Honolulu for provisions. At that time, the coast of California was largely barren territory, while Hawai'i, being

the base for many whaling ships, offered adequate victualing and ships stores. News, too, usually reached Hawai'i before getting to California.

So Jones proceeded along the coast of California on the *Cyane* and on the 17th of January in 1843 reached the port of San Pedro, then an important coastal city but now a part of Los Angeles. At San Pedro, he received a polite invitation from General Micheltorena to meet with him in Los Angeles.

The next day the Commodore was taken to the city in the General's caleche. He met the General in the home of Abel Stearns, a native Philadelphian who had come to California 15 years earlier, developed mining and commercial interests, married into one of the best families, and become a Mexican citizen. Great pomp and ceremony attended the meetings of the General and the Commodore. A dinner and a ball were held in honor of the visitor. And at one point General Micheltorena read, in Spanish, and delivered to the Commodore a "convention" giving a bravura account of Micheltorena's part in "repelling the invader." The Commodore considered the document "preposterous" and returned it the next morning, unsigned, stating that he had no authority to sign such a document, and, furthermore, that it was "objectionable."<sup>36</sup>

Jones may not have known that Micheltorena had sent dispatches to Mexico similar to the "convention" and that these had already been published in Mexico City.

Micheltorena said no more about the "convention," and the two men met several more times to express great personal friendship. On the third day Jones returned to the *Cyane*.

Now the Mexican Government took up the cudgels. Bocanegra wrote to Daniel Webster, demanding that the Commodore be recalled and severely punished. Waddy Thompson wrote to Bocanegra, objecting to Micheltorena's "coarse and abusive epithets" and "the tone of rudeness and gasconade of his note of the fifth of October" which the Mexican Government had published without rebuke.<sup>37</sup>

Word of the Monterey affair reached Washington in December 1842, and for a while Daniel Webster was busy writing letters explaining Jones's action, declaring that the Commodore had no intention of injuring the honor of Mexico. Webster offered reparation for any damage that might have been done to any citizen of Mexico.<sup>38</sup>

Secretary of the Navy Upshur also wrote to Jones, relieving him of command of the Pacific Squadron. He added: "Commodore Dallas will relieve you as soon as he can conveniently reach the station &

you will return to the United States in such mode as may be most convenient & agreeable to yourself."<sup>39</sup> Although the letter was written late in January of 1843, it did not reach Jones until six months later, and only after the Commodore was drawn into another expedition to Hawai'i.

#### THE BRITISH SEIZURE OF HAWAI'I

January of 1843 found Hawai'i in difficulties again, with British Consul Charlton's land claims at the center of the fuss. This time he had the support of another Briton, Alexander Simpson, who wanted his country's naval forces to intervene. Simpson wrote later:

I laboured to bring about the result, with a full conviction that it would be a blessing to the native population of all classes, . . . and would add another valuable possession to those wherewith England already almost encircles the earth.<sup>40</sup>

On January 17, Rear-Admiral Richard Thomas, Britain's Pacific Squadron commander, sent Lord George Paulet in HMS *Carysfort* to Hawai'i to settle problems that extended widely and involved trade, land ownership, the prominence of American missionaries in Hawaiian ruling circles, and Charlton's insistence on the recognition of Alexander Simpson as acting consul during Charlton's absence from Honolulu. He followed up immediately with a letter to Paulet telling him:

. . . the Government of Great Britain will hold that of the Sandwich Islands responsible for the marked want of respect, which has been shewn to the Queen of Great Britain in taking advantage of the absence of Her representative to sequester his property and annoy his unprotected family.<sup>41</sup>

At about the same time, Thomas began hearing about Commodore Jones's activities on the coast of California. Eustace Barron, British Consul at Tepic, wrote, "informing me that the American Squadron under the command of Commodore Jones had taken possession of the Tower and Castle of Monterey, with the intention of occupying both Californias."<sup>42</sup>

A few days later, Commander Byron, on the English ship *Champion*, reported to Thomas the arrival of the U.S. frigate *United States* at Mazatlan, Mexico, and stated that Commodore Jones was expected on the *Cyane* within a week.<sup>43</sup>

In February, Admiral Thomas wrote a series of letters to the Admiralty, requesting an increase in the strength of Britain's Pacific Squadron and detailing Jones's hostile action at Monterey. He

quoted the fears of British consuls and concluded by "again urging that their Lordships will give my request for an increase to the Squadron very favorable consideration."<sup>44</sup>

A few days later he sent various documents to the Admiralty concerning "the hostile proceedings of the American Squadron under the command of Commodore Jones in October last," and added that "Commodore Jones arrived at Mazatlan on the 1st February (instant) in the 'Cyane' and immediately shifted a broad Pendant to the 'United States.' . . ."<sup>45</sup>

Clearly, Admiral Thomas was worried. He had already sent Paulet to the Islands with instructions that seemed to give him considerable leeway. And he knew that Jones was still in the Pacific area and still opposed to British expansionist moves.

Lord George Paulet descended on Honolulu on February 10, 1843, conferred immediately with Alexander Simpson, and demanded concessions from the Hawaiians. When these were not forthcoming, he seized the Islands and ruled Hawai'i as British territory. Paulet interfered with the laws of the Islands, required the signing of a 299-year lease for Charlton's land, and generally overrode native wishes in things civil and spiritual.

William Hooper, acting U.S. agent for commerce and seamen at Honolulu, had already written to the commander of the U.S. Pacific Squadron, "stating his firm belief that either the French or the British flag would be raised" over the Islands within a few months.<sup>46</sup> Now the British were in full control.

Meanwhile, Commodore Jones waited on the Pacific coast of the Americas, expecting word that he had been recalled. He took the *United States* to Valparaiso in April to meet Commodore Dallas if he should come around Cape Horn, and came back to Callao on June 7 in case Dallas came via Panama.<sup>47</sup>

For 17 days the *United States* waited in Callao. It had been eight months since the Monterey incident and still no word from Washington. Jones felt that someone had to be taking care of the business of the American Pacific Squadron, and that business now was the takeover of Hawai'i by the British. Furthermore, he thought that no American commander was better informed than he was on the situation in Hawai'i.

Paulet had been in control in Hawai'i for more than four months when, on June 21, 1843, Jones left Callao and headed west. The Commodore may not have known that he was again rushing to a meeting with Admiral Thomas. But it is clear, in retrospect, that



Thomas in HMS *Dublin*, sailing from Valparaiso, and Jones in USS *United States*, sailing from Callao, were headed for Hawai'i at the same time.

The *United States* reached Byron's Bay (Hilo) on July 22, after 32 days at sea, and remained in port for 11 days, giving Jones an opportunity to talk with the missionary Titus Coan and learn about Hawai'i under the sway of Paulet.

Coan didn't like Paulet's takeover any more than did the missionaries and chiefs in Honolulu. Coan reported home:

About the middle of July Lord George Paulet made a visit to Hilo, in the *Carysfort*. He went directly to the prisons, and in contempt of the remonstrances of judges, wardens, sheriffs, and others, turned loose a company of infamous men and women, to spread pollution through the community. . . . While at this place, however, an express arrived with despatches ordering him to return to Oahu. . . .

A little later in his report, Mr. Coan stated:

In striking contrast with what has been said of the *Carysfort*, I cannot forbear noticing the more recent visit of Commodore Thomas Ap Catesby Jones to our port, in the frigate *United States*. This noble flag ship, commanded by Captain James Armstrong, entered our harbor on the 22nd of July, and left early in the present month, after having spent about two weeks with us. We had never before had the pleasure of meeting with Commodore Jones; but his name had become associated in our minds with urbanity, candor, truth, uprightness, and honor; and we were prepared to welcome him to our shores. We found him the same firm and fearless friend to truth and of universal improvement that he was when he visited Oahu in the *Peacock*, in the autumn of 1826.<sup>48</sup>

During the 11 days Commodore Jones stayed at Byron's Bay, the *United States* was restocked with wood, water, and food, and some of his officers trekked up the mountain to "the volcano." Titus Coan held a "great meeting" at which the *United States* band played, the local Hawaiians sang, and Commodore Jones delivered a speech denouncing drunkenness and praising the missionary effort in the Islands.<sup>49</sup>

Admiral Thomas and the *Dublin* sailed into the port of Honolulu on July 26. Four days later Thomas countermanded the orders of Paulet and returned the Islands to Kamehameha III in a formal ceremony. He declared that "Her Majesty [Queen Victoria] sincerely desires King Kamehameha to be treated as an *Independent Sovereign*."<sup>50</sup>

When Commodore Jones arrived at Honolulu on August 4, the harbor was crowded with two U.S. frigates, the *United States* and *Constellation*, and three British ships, the frigates *Dublin* and *Carysfort* and the sloop *Hazard*. A day later the U.S. sloop *Cyane* arrived.



Commodore Lawrence Kearney, on the *Constellation*, reported that it was "the largest force ever before collected at these islands."<sup>51</sup>

Kearny had been in Honolulu for a month, returning from his station as commander of the U.S. East Indies Squadron. He had already raised the ire of Paulet by saluting the Hawaiian flag during the visit of some "young chiefs" aboard the *Constellation*, so the British knew of his objections to the seizure of the Islands. And Thomas knew of Jones's opposition to British colonial ambitions. The situation could have been ominous had not Admiral Thomas already taken action that returned the Islands to Hawaiian rule.

By this time, Honolulu was in the midst of a ten-day celebration of the Restoration, and Jones was quick to take part in the negotiations that followed and wrote to Upshur:

My former visit and services at that port in 1827 were still fresh in the memory of the local actors of the scenes at the present time. . . .

My first efforts were directed to an inquiry into and an adjustment of the differences between our Acting Consul Mr. W. Hooper, and Lord George Paulet. . . . These two men first met at my dinner table; this was followed by an invitation from Lord George Paulet to Mr. Hooper to meet Admiral Thomas, myself and others, at dinner on board H.B.M. 'Carysfort.' Lord George Paulet having previously waited on Mr. Hooper on shore, he accepted the invitation at my desire, and accompanied me to the 'Carysfort' laying in the inner harbour of Oahu. At the appointed hour as we approached the English ship *her yards were manned*; and two salutes—the first of 13 [guns] and the second of 9—were fired. . . .

Our countrymen on shore, however, though pleased with this public manifestation of respect to the American Flag, were not all of them fully appeased; nor will anything but time eradicate all the feelings of bitterness engendered by the transactions of Lord Paulet. . . .<sup>52</sup>

Jones wrote several letters to Secretary Upshur while in Honolulu, explaining his presence in Hawai'i and complaining that he had not heard from the Navy Department since he embarked on his Monterey mission. He met with Kearny, and the two commanders decided that when they left the Islands, Kearny would go east to California, and Jones would go south to Tahiti, as part of their continued patrolling of the Pacific. Jones reported to Upshur on August 7:

Our merchants and citizens beg me to remain until irregularities resulting from the English occupation are adjusted. I shall do so, unless more time is required than I apprehend at present. When I leave here it will be for Callao, via the Marquesas and Society Islands.<sup>53</sup>

To help restore harmony in the Islands, Commodore Jones threw a party aboard his flagship. He described it this way:

I invited every respectable person in Oahu, without distinction of nation or sex, as well as the British Admiral and all his Officers, to meet the King at lunch, on the 12th of August; of course, the Officers of our own three ships were [invited], while preparations

were made to entertain two hundred persons. The affair went off very well; the King left (as he had been received) under the salute of 21 guns, with yards manned on board all the men of war, aflout 5 p.m., and embarked in one of his own schooners laying near us and immediately made sail for Maui attended by the 'Constellation.'<sup>54</sup>

It is interesting to note that Commodore Jones, so often accused of being belligerent and anti-British, actually worked to achieve understanding and good relations between the British and American factions on the Hawaiian Islands. That doesn't alter the fact that he was ready to fight the British at Monterey, if that had been necessary.

The *United States* sailed from Honolulu on August 19th, after Jones had sent another letter to Upshur in which he concluded:

I have only to repeat my recommendations of this port as a Naval Depot, and to inform you that the authorities offer every facility for our accommodation; and that the council have agreed to the landing of our Naval Stores and provisions free of duty.<sup>55</sup>

It would be 40 years before the United States Navy would follow up on Jones's suggestion and negotiate for the establishment of Pearl Harbor. But the Commodore left Hawai'i believing that he had helped in preserving the freedom of the Islands and in pointing the U.S. toward effective relations with Hawaiian authorities.

#### THE VOYAGE HOME

With Paulet's seizure of the Hawaiian Islands cancelled, Commodore Jones took the *United States* through the South Sea islands on a return trip to Callao. At Nuku Hiva he found the first of four letters addressed to him by Commodore Alexander J. Dallas, who had arrived at Callao in July and now (October of 1843) was searching the Pacific trying to locate Jones. This was the first news Jones had of Dallas's whereabouts. It was also the first confirmation of his recall. At Valparaíso and Callao Jones received other letters from Dallas, all peremptory, all requiring Jones to wait at Callao to transfer command of the Pacific Squadron.<sup>56</sup>

Jones waited at Callao from December 15, 1843, until January 24, 1844, for the irate Dallas to catch up with him, then left a letter for Dallas saying that, since Dallas had already "assumed command" of the Pacific Squadron, Jones was returning to Washington in accordance with instructions from Upshur. Jones then boarded the *Constellation* as a guest of Commodore Kearny and returned by way of Cape Horn to report to the Navy Department.

Secretary Upshur had long since left the Navy, having moved to the State Department upon the resignation of Daniel Webster in

May of 1843. So far as the Monterey incident was concerned, Jones was commended, privately, for his devotion to duty. And nothing was said, so far as is known, about his trip to Hawai'i. Evidently the Department adopted Dallas's view—that Jones was trying to avoid turning over command of the Pacific Squadron.

Commodore Dallas arrived in Callao long after Jones had left, and, on February 24, 1844, preferred charges against Jones, asserting that he "did disobey a written order sent to him by the said Captain A. J. Dallas, dated Callao 25th July 1843. . . ."<sup>57</sup> Jones responded with his own charges against Dallas, accusing him of taking over the Pacific Squadron without proper transfer of command. The Navy, in its wisdom, threw out the charges of both captains.

A few months later, Commodore Dallas died at sea aboard the USS *Savannah*. His bitterness against Commodore Jones may have continued after him, for in the next few months James K. Polk was elected President of the United States, and his Vice President was George Dallas, brother of A. J. Dallas.

In 1844 Jones returned to his estate in Virginia, only a few miles from Washington, D.C., where he remained for several years. In 1845 he served on the commission of distinguished captains that set up the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis. And in that same year he asked the Navy Department why he was not getting another assignment. He received this reply from Navy Secretary J. Y. Mason:

The President [Polk] has authorized me to say to you that in those circumstances of your conduct while in command of the Pacific Squadron, which induced your recall, on explanation, he perceives evidences of an ardent zeal in the service of your Country, and a devotion to what you deemed to be your duty, regardless of personal consequence, which entitles you to anything but censure from your Government. Ample atonement having been made to Mexico for your acts complained of, there has been no disposition to visit you with punishment of any description for conduct actuated by such elevated principles of duty. . . .<sup>58</sup>

The Monterey affair was now laid to rest, so far as the Navy was concerned. What remained was the personal grudge of Commodore A. J. Dallas, who has convinced generations of historians that Jones had no purpose when he sailed to Hawaii in 1843, even though he was present at the Restoration.

When the U.S.-Mexican War broke out in 1846 over the festering boundary problems in Texas, Jones sought another active command, but it was not until 1848 that the Navy appointed him, for a second time, as commander-in-chief of the Pacific Squadron.

However, by the time he reached the Pacific to board his flagship, the U.S.S. *Ohio*, an 86-gun line-of-battle ship, the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo had ended the war, and Jones's task became a peacemaker's job, full of trouble and adversity, with no glory anywhere. To complicate matters further, word of discovery of gold in California came at about the same time.

Sailors now deserted ships of the Pacific Squadron in droves. Jones instituted strict rules to keep crews aboard ship while in port. He cruised the Mexican ports to pick up refugees (mostly Mexican officials and their families who had expected the United States to take over Baja California as well as Alta California, and who were now considered traitors by other Mexicans) and take them north.

When Jones arrived at Monterey, discipline had become a terrible problem, and at San Francisco the turmoil in the city added to the Commodore's demands for discipline aboard ship. To make matters worse, currency was scarce and the California economy suffered. Jones used military funds to compensate the refugees and to provide exchange for the economy by buying gold dust and sending it to Philadelphia for mint purposes—coinage.

The principal objectors to his activities on the California coast were the sailors, and Jones came down hard on junior officers who, in Jones's view, were lax in discipline, allowing some sailors to desert to get to the gold fields. Some officers, with political connections at home, complained about the Commodore. As a result, Jones was recalled and faced a court-martial in 1850-51. Charges were "oppression" and mishandling of government funds. Despite Jones's assertion that his tight discipline prevented a mutiny and that he had returned to the government all government funds penny for penny, Jones was convicted and suspended for five years with loss of pay for two and a half years. In 1853, the remainder of his suspension was rescinded and he was "restored to the service." But by then he was 63 years old, and the Navy was trying to rebuild its officer corps with younger men. The Commodore died in 1858 and is buried in the graveyard of the church he founded at Lewinsville, Virginia.

For the most part it is now recognized that, even when he was wrong, Jones acted from the highest motives of duty and patriotism, and his attack on Monterey may have convinced Admiral Thomas that he should return Hawaii to the rule of Kamehameha III, thus avoiding a confrontation of British and American navies that might have been more serious at Honolulu than at Monterey. It would be interesting to learn that, at the time of the celebration of Restoration

Day in Hawaii, someone might have a kindly word to say for Commodore Thomas ap Catesby Jones.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Resolution of the Virginia General Assembly, *Alexandria* (Virginia) *Gazette*, 27 February 1841.
- <sup>2</sup> For an opposing view, see Robert H. Stauffer, "The Hawai'i-United States Treaty of 1826," *HJH*, 17 (1983) 40-63. Stauffer argues that Jones was a headstrong, vain renegade with a penchant for trouble.
- <sup>3</sup> For a full discussion, see Edwin P. Hoyt, *Mutiny on the Globe* (New York: Random House, 1975).
- <sup>4</sup> Executive Document No. 92, "Thomas ap Catesby Jones," 28th Congress, Second Session, 10.
- <sup>5</sup> Executive Document No. 92: 10-11.
- <sup>6</sup> Executive Document No. 92: 12.
- <sup>7</sup> Gavan Daws, *Shoal of Time: A History of the Hawaiian Islands* (New York: Macmillan, 1968) 77.
- <sup>8</sup> Executive Document No. 30, "John Percival," 23rd Congress, First Session, 1.
- <sup>9</sup> Testimony of Alfred P. Edwards, master of the ship *London*, Court of Inquiry into activities of Lieut. Percival, May 1826, Judge Advocate General's Office of Navy Dept., M273, National Archives, Washington, D. C.: hereafter referred to as NA.
- <sup>10</sup> Hiram Bingham, *A Residence of Twenty-one Years in the Sandwich Islands* (1849: rpt. Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1981) 303.
- <sup>11</sup> Samuel Southard to Isaac Hull, letter, 24 May 1825, House Executive Document No. 92: 8.
- <sup>12</sup> Thomas ap Catesby Jones to Isaac Hill, letter, 9 June 1826, Franklin D. Roosevelt naval manuscript collection, Hyde Park, N. Y.
- <sup>13</sup> T. ap C. Jones, "Report of the Peacock's Cruise to the Sandwich, Society and Other Islands in the Pacific Ocean Performed in the Years 1826 and 1827," *Hawaiian Historical Papers 1826-1934*, U of Michigan Library, Ann Arbor, Mich.
- <sup>14</sup> Albertine Loomis interview, 21 March 1978, Honolulu.
- <sup>15</sup> Bingham, *Residence* 302.
- <sup>16</sup> Albertine Loomis, *Grapes of Canaan: Hawaii 1820* (1951; Honolulu: HMCS, 1966) 284-300.
- <sup>17</sup> T. ap C. Jones to Jas. C. Dobbin, Secretary of the Navy, letter, 29 Dec. 1855, Captains' Letters, M125, NA.
- <sup>18</sup> Jones to Dobbin, letter.
- <sup>19</sup> Jones to Dobbin, letter.
- <sup>20</sup> House Executive Document No. 92: 20.
- <sup>21</sup> Jones to Dobbin, letter 29 Dec. 1855.
- <sup>22</sup> Ross H. Gast, *Contentious Consul, A Biography of John Coffin Jones* (Los Angeles: Dawson Book Shop, 19-6) 83-84.
- <sup>23</sup> Bingham, *Residence* 303.
- <sup>24</sup> Jones, "Report of the *Peacock's* Cruise."
- <sup>25</sup> Jones to Navy Secretary A. P. Upshur, Letter, Callao Bay, 21 May 1842, Pacific Squadron Letters M89, NA.

- <sup>26</sup> Richard Packenham to Lord Aberdeen, letter, 30 August 1841, FO 50 146, Public Record Office, London.
- <sup>27</sup> Hope (writing for the Colonial Secretary) to Lord Aberdeen, letter, 23 November 1841.
- <sup>28</sup> J. M. de Bocanegra to Daniel Webster, letter Mexico [City], 12 May 1842, Notes from the Mexican Legation, NA.
- <sup>29</sup> J. C. Pickett to Daniel Webster, letter Lima, 6 September 1842, Despatches [sic], Ministers to Peru, T52 NA.
- <sup>30</sup> Latitude 12°15' south, Longitude 77°37' west; Jones to his three captains, memo, 8 September 1842, PSL M89, NA.
- <sup>31</sup> Executive Document No. 166, House of Representatives, 27th Congress, 3rd Session, 22.
- <sup>32</sup> Executive Document No. 166: 21.
- <sup>33</sup> William H. Meyers, *Journal of a Cruise to California and the Sandwich Islands in the United States Sloop-of-War CTANE*, ed. John Haskell Kemble (San Francisco: Book Club of California, 1955) 7.
- <sup>34</sup> Jones to Waddy Thompson, letter, 19 October 1842; Jones to Upshur, 24 October 1842; PSL NA.
- <sup>35</sup> Don Manuel Micheltorena to General Don Jose Maria Tornel Mendivil, letter, Los Angeles, November 1842, Executive Document No. 166: 18.
- <sup>36</sup> Visit to Los Angeles in 1843, Unpublished Narrative of Commodore Thomas ap Catesby Jones, U. S. Navy, privately printed (rpt. Los Angeles: *Daily Alta California*, 1960).
- <sup>37</sup> Waddy Thompson to J. M. de Bocanegra, letter Mexico, 27 December 1842, Executive Document No. 166: 12-14.
- <sup>38</sup> Daniel Webster to General Don J. N. Almonte, Mexican Minister to Washington, letter 30 January 1843. Executive Document No. 166: 5-6.
- <sup>39</sup> Upshur to Jones, letter to Officers, Ships of War, 24 January 1843, M149, NA.
- <sup>40</sup> Ralph S. Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. I, 1778-1854, *Foundation and Transformation* (Honolulu: U of Hawaii P, 1965) 210.
- <sup>41</sup> Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. I, 210.
- <sup>42</sup> Journal of the Proceedings of Rr Adml Richard Thomas, ADM 50/228 vol. 199, Public Record Office, London.
- <sup>43</sup> Thomas, Journal, letters received, 18 January 1843, PRO.
- <sup>44</sup> Thomas, Journal, letters written, 4 February 1843, PRO.
- <sup>45</sup> Thomas, Journal, letters written, 8 February 1843, PRO.
- <sup>46</sup> Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. I, 213.
- <sup>47</sup> Logbook of frigate *United States*, NA.
- <sup>48</sup> Report of Titus Coan, 12 August 1843, in *MH*, June 1844: 187.
- <sup>49</sup> Report of Titus Coan 187.
- <sup>50</sup> Kuykendall, *The Hawaiian Kingdom*, vol. I, 220.
- <sup>51</sup> Lawrence Kearny to Upshur, letter Sandwich Islands, 6 August 1843, PSL, NA M89.
- <sup>52</sup> Jones to Upshur, letter, Valparaiso, 21 November 1843, PSL, NA M89.
- <sup>53</sup> Jones to Upshur, letter, Honolulu, 7 August 1843, PSL, NA M89.
- <sup>54</sup> Jones to Upshur, letter, Valparaiso, 21 November 1843 PSL NA M89.
- <sup>55</sup> Jones to Upshur, letter, Honolulu, 19 August 1843, PSL NA M89.
- <sup>56</sup> Alexander J. Dallas to Jones, letter, U.S.S. *Erie*, Callao and Honolulu, PSL M89, NA.
- <sup>57</sup> Charges and Specifications, A. J. Dallas, 24 February 1844, PSL M89, NA.
- <sup>58</sup> J. Y. Mason to Jones, letter, 1 March 1845, Navy Dept. ZB file.